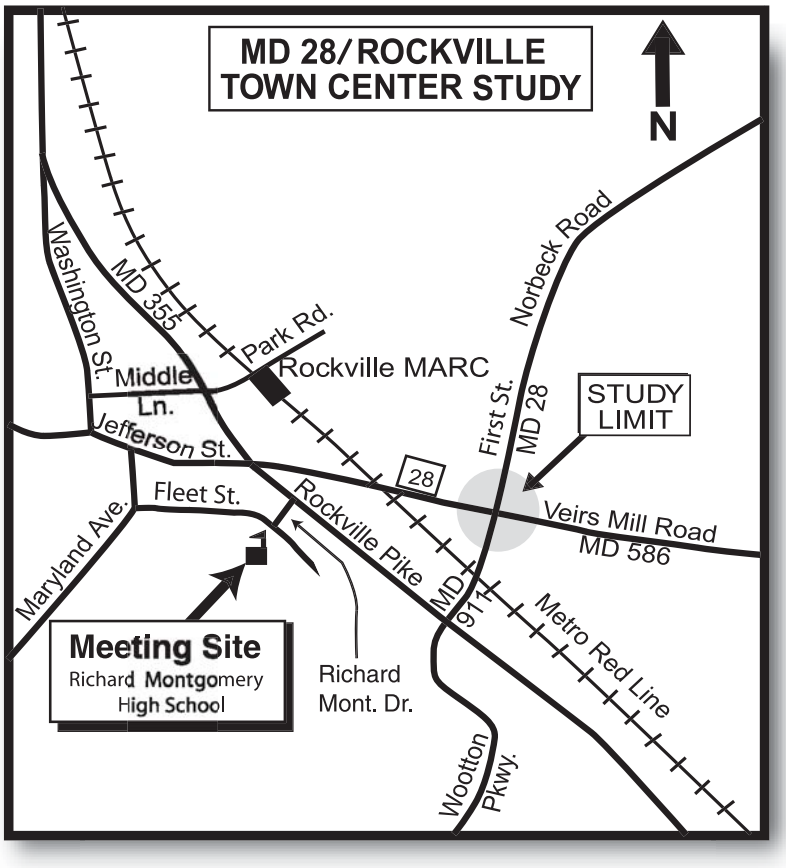
MD 28 / Rockville Town Center
(Veirs Mill Road at First Street) Improvement Study

ALTERNATES
Public Workshop



Tuesday
May 11, 2004

Displays Available
5:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Richard Montgomery High School
250 Richard Montgomery Dr.
Rockville, MD 20852

Project No. MO843B11

Maryland Department of Transportation
STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) is conducting a Project Planning study for the MD 28 / Rockville Town Center: Veirs Mill Road at First Street intersection, located in Rockville, Maryland.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the proposed project is to develop alternates to improve the traffic operations, address congestion specific to this intersection and improve pedestrian and bicycle access.

PURPOSE OF THE WORKSHOP

The purpose of the MD 28 / Rockville Town Center Workshop is to familiarize interested citizens with the Project Planning study, present preliminary improvement alternates, receive public comments on the intersection of Veirs Mill Road and First Street, and provide an opportunity for public participation in the overall planning process.

The public workshop is co-sponsored by the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in conjunction with the City of Rockville. Displays will be available from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Citizens will have the opportunity to visit project displays, which will include maps depicting alternates currently under consideration, traffic data, and environmental impacts.

Please note that there will be no formal presentation by SHA. However, SHA, Montgomery County and City of Rockville representatives will be available to receive comments and answer questions.

HOW TO PROVIDE COMMENTS ON THE PROJECT

The public is encouraged to participate in this workshop and in the planning process. These alternates are preliminary and appropriate changes may be made after comments are received and evaluated. Comments may be given verbally to SHA representatives at the workshop. Also, a comment card is enclosed in this brochure for your use. Comment cards will also be available at the workshop. The brochure comment card can also be used to add your name to the project mailing list. You may also add your name by registering with the meeting receptionist located at the main entrance of the facility. However, if you received a copy of this brochure in the mail, you are already included on the mailing list.

PROGRAM STATUS

The project is included in the Maryland Department of Transportation's Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP); however, funding is currently programmed for the Project Planning phase only. At the present time, funds for final design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction are not programmed.

PROJECT NEED

There is a need to improve the MD 28/MD 586/ MD 911(Veirs Mill Road at First Street) intersection because of the anticipated increase in traffic turning movement volumes, land use changes, existing weave movement conflicts and back ups.

The need to improve traffic operations is demonstrated by the existing and projected Levels-of-Service (LOS) for the intersection (See Table 1). The Level-of-Service (LOS) is a measure of the congestion experienced by drivers, and ranges from "A" (free flow with little or no congestion) to "F" (failure with stop-and-go conditions). LOS is normally computed for the peak hours of the typical

day, with LOS D (approaching unstable flow) or better being considered acceptable for highways in urban and suburban areas. At LOS E traffic volumes are near the capacity of the highway. LOS F represents conditions over the designed capacity of the highway, evidenced by operational breakdowns with stop-and-go conditions and extremely long delays at signalized intersections. Volume to capacity (v/c) ratios numerically show how many vehicles or what volume of the traffic exists in comparison to the capacity of the roadway. A v/c ratio of 1.0 means that the volume of traffic is at the capacity of the roadway and represents a LOS F condition.

Based on approved future land use, traffic conditions are forecasted to worsen by the design year, at which time the intersection will be operating at a worse LOS (see Table 1). To minimize the impacts associated with planned and approved development, improvements that will facilitate access between east Rockville and the Town Center as well as the rail station are being considered.

Improvements at this intersection would also reduce queues for traffic traveling southbound on MD 28 (First Street) to westbound MD 28 (Veirs Mill Road), resulting in improved traffic operations. In addition, there are weaving conflicts between eastbound MD 28 (Veirs Mill Road) to northbound MD 28 (First Street) from the Stonestreet Avenue ramp and through eastbound MD 28 (Veirs Mill Road) traffic.

Sidewalks and crosswalks will enhance access to the MARC and the Metro Station within the intersection area. Also, improved bicycle access would complement WMATA's existing investment in bicycle lockers and racks, as well as the City of Rockville and Montgomery County investments in bicycle paths.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Veirs Mill Road at First Street intersection project limits are Baltimore Road to the north, MD 911 to the railroad crossing to the south, Edmonston Drive to the east and Dodge Street to the west. The Veirs Mill Road at First Street intersection is experiencing failure in both the AM and PM peak hours.

ALTERNATES CURRENTLY UNDER CONSIDERATION

There are five alternates currently under consideration including the No-Build Alternate and four "build" alternates.

Alternate 1: No-Build

The No-Build Alternate consists of routine maintenance, minor reconstruction projects and developer based roadway improvements associated with new developments. Transportation Systems Management (TSM) strategies are a part of the No-build Alternate. TSM strategies optimize the existing transportation system. The TSM strategies being considered include channelization/intersection improvements, signalization, and improved transit connectivity. It should be noted that the City of Rockville and Montgomery County encourage TSM strategies for new development or redevelopment and have already implemented some of their own programs. The No-Build Alternate serves as a baseline for the comparison of the other proposed alternates (see Figure 1).

Alternate 2: Grade Separated

This grade separated alternate provides an urban diamond interchange at the intersection of Veirs Mill Road at First Street. Veirs Mill Road is elevated over First Street and is treated as the primary movement. This means that the traffic along Veirs Mills Road would not have to stop. The ramps associated with the interchange would

require some roadway widening and would replace the current turning maneuvers with a new traffic signal on First Street (see Figure 2).

The typical roadway section for this alternate consists of two 13' eastbound through lanes and two 13' westbound through lanes, which are separated by a 10' median. There are three off-ramp and two on-ramp lanes, with the outside lanes being 15' wide to accommodate bicyclists. Pedestrians would use 6' sidewalks separated from the ramps with a 6' planting strip (see Figure 6).

Alternate 3: Grade Separated

This grade separated alternate provides an urban diamond interchange at the intersection of Veirs Mill Road at First Street. In this case, First Street is depressed under Veirs Mill Road and is treated as the primary movement. This means that the traffic along First Street would not have to stop. The ramps associated with the interchange would require some roadway widening and would replace the current turning movements with a new traffic signal on Veirs Mill Road (see Figure 3).

The roadway section for this alternate consists of two 13' northbound through lanes and two 13' southbound through lanes, which are separated by a 10' median. There are three off-ramp and two on-ramp lanes, with the outside lanes being 15' wide to accommodate bicyclists. Pedestrians would use 6' sidewalks separated from the ramps with a 6' planting strip (see Figure 6).

Alternate 4: At-Grade

This alternate includes sidewalks and on-street bicycle facilities, transit improvements, and traffic operation improvements. The traffic improvements for Alternate 4 were determined by developing a lane configuration that would maintain the LOS for the design year 2025 that equals or exceeds the LOS experienced today(see Table 1). Widening is needed on all four approaches to meet these desired provisions (see Figure 4).

The roadway section for this alternate will consist of four eastbound through lanes and three westbound through lanes with 15' wide outside lanes to accommodate bicyclists. Pedestrians would use 6' sidewalks separated from the roadway with a 6' planting strip. Various combinations of curbing and medians with pedestrian refuges are proposed throughout the project limits (see Figure 7).

Alternate 4A: At-Grade

This alternate is similar to Alternate 4; however, the traffic improvements include a lane configuration that would result in a LOS for the design year 2025 that is better than the LOS experienced today (see Table 1). Widening of all four approaches is needed to meet these operational goals (see Figure 5).

The roadway section for this alternate would consist of four eastbound through lanes and four westbound through lanes with 15' wide outside lanes to accommodate bicyclists. Pedestrians would use 6' sidewalks separated from the roadway with a 6' planting strip. Various combinations of curbing and medians with pedestrian refuges are proposed throughout the project limits (see Figure 7).

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE SUMMARY

An assessment of the project area has been completed to identify socio-economic, cultural and natural environmental resources (see Table 2). Impacts to these resources associated with the proposed improvements will be further refined as the alternates are developed in more detail.

LAND USE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Existing land use in the project area consists largely of residential, single family housing with some commercial uses/office buildings in the southwest quadrant of the intersection. Future land

use within the immediate project area is projected to remain the same. However, additional mixed-use commercial, public and institutional and residential development is proposed within the Rockville Town Center and at the two major intersections closest to the project area (MD 355 at MD 911 and MD 355 at MD 28).

A portion of the southwest quadrant is included in the Rockville Town Center Planning Area. Improvements under consideration are consistent with the City of Rockville's goals as stated in the City of Rockville's approved and adopted Master Plan (2001).

The study area is located within a densely populated, urban area. Each build alternate would require additional right-of-way, which could result in from 12 to 22 residential relocations and one commercial displacement, requiring from 4 to 6 acres of right-of-way. No publicly owned public parks or recreational areas were identified in the project area.

Emergency response time in the study area is expected to improve as a result of the proposed improvements.

To date, and in compliance with Executive Order (EO) 12898 "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in the Minority and Low-Income Populations", no minority or low-income populations have been identified within the study area.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Rockville Park Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is located in the study area. Additionally, the study area is also likely to contain archeologial resources. The need for additional archeological investigations will be determined following the selection of alternates retained for detailed study. SHA will continue to coordinate with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) to determine the effect of the alternates on cultural resources. In accordance with the Section 106 procedures of the National Historic Preservation Act, this Public Alternates Workshop provides an opportunity for public input regarding cultural resources.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The study area is located in within a densely populated, urban area. Vegetation consists mainly of landscaping and residential plantings. Coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) determined that no federal or state proposed or listed endangered or threatened species or unique habitats are known to exist within the project area. Cabin John Creek, Rock Creek, and their tributaries are located within the study area. These streams and all their tributaries in the vicinity of the proposed project are classified as Use I Waters by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) (suitable for recreation, habitat for warm and cold water fish and other wildlife). To protect these uses, MDE may restrict in-stream work from March 1st through June 15th inclusive, during any year. No stream impacts are anticipated with any of the alternates under consideration. Three potential wetlands were identified in close proximately to the current study area. Wetland impacts are anticipated with the proposed alternates (see Table 2). Stormwater management and sediment and erosion control plans will be developed to minimize impacts to water quality and will be implemented in accordance with the MDE regulations.

The need for air quality and noise analyses will be evaluated following the selection of alternates retained for detailed study.

FOCUS GROUP

As part of the Project Planning Process, SHA has assembled a Focus Group, comprised of local residents, community leaders, and business representatives. This group has provided feedback

and local perspectives to the study team in the development of proposed improvements. Comments and suggestions received from the Focus Group have been evaluated and incorporated into the alternates, where possible.

REMAINING PLANNING STEPS

- Determine Alternates Retained for Detailed Study
- Perform detailed engineering and environmental technical studies
- Prepare draft environmental documentation
- Hold Location/Design Public Hearing
- Identify a selected alternate
- Prepare final environmental documentation
- Obtain Location/Design Approval

MEDIA USED FOR WORKSHOP NOTIFICATION

Advertisements for the meeting appeared in the following newspapers:

- **The Washington Post**
- **The Gazette (Rockville)**
- **The Montgomery Sentinel**
- **The Montgomery Journal**

STATE-AID PROGRAMS

Should you have any questions concerning non-discrimination in federally listed and State-Aid programs, please contact:

Mr. Walter Owens, Jr., Director
Office of Equal Opportunity
State Highway Administration
707 North Calvert Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
Phone: (410) 545-0315

RIGHT-OF-WAY AND RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

The proposed project may require additional right-of-way. For information regarding right-of-way and relocation assistance, please contact:

Mr. Doug Mills, Chief
District #3 Office of Right of Way
State Highway Administration
9300 Kenilworth Avenue
Greenbelt, MD 20770
Telephone: (301) 513-7476

PROJECT PLANNING TEAM

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact one of the persons below:

Mr. Raja Veeramachaneni, Director
Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering
Maryland State Highway Administration
Mail Stop C-411
707 N. Calvert Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
Telephone: (410) 545-0412

Mr. Charles K. Watkins
District Engineer - District #3
Maryland State Highway Administration
9300 Kenilworth Avenue
Greenbelt, MD 20770
Telephone: (301) 513-7311

Ms. Carmeletta T. Harris
Project Manager
Project Planning Division
Maryland State Highway Administration
Mailstop C-301
707 North Calvert Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
(410) 545-8522
Toll Free in Maryland 1-800-548-5026
charris@sha.state.md.us

Mr. Phillip Bello
Federal Highway Administration
10 S. Howard St.
Baltimore, MD 21201
Telephone: (410) 779-7156

Information on this and other SHA projects can be obtained at the SHA web site at www.marylandroads.com.

MD 28 Rockville Town Center Study

Traffic Analysis Results at Veirs Mill Road/First Street

TABLE 1

	AM		PM	
	LOS	v/c	LOS	v/c
Existing(2002)	F	1.00	F	1.11
2025 No-Build	F	1.43	F	1.67
Alt 2: Grade Separated	C	0.79	D	0.87
Alt 3: Grade Separated	D	0.85	E	0.95
Alt 4: At-Grade	E	0.95	F	1.06
Alt 4A: At-Grade	D	0.84	E	0.94

Costs and Impacts Summary Chart

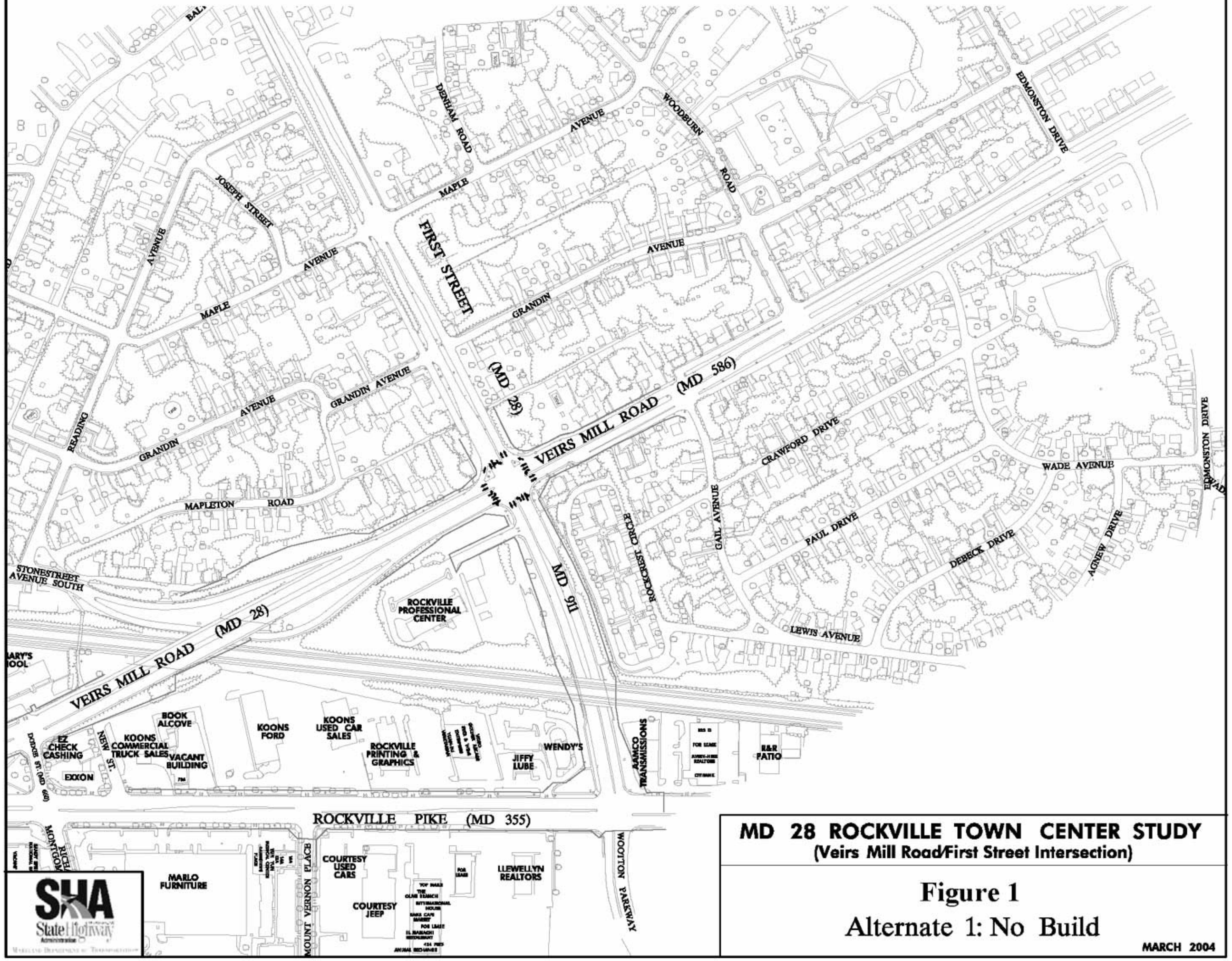
TABLE 2

	Alternate 1: No Build	Alternate 2: Grade Separated	Alternate 3: Grade Separated	Alternate 4: At Grade	Alternate 4A: At Grade
Right-of-Way					
Residential Displacements	0	18	22	12	15
Commercial Displacements	0	0	1	0	0
Parking Impacts (spaces*)	0	34	35	42	42
Properties Affected	0	35	36	30	33
Total Right-of-Way (acres)	0	6	5	4	5
Environmental Features					
Wetlands (acres)	0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Streams (linear feet)	0	0	0	0	0
Parks (acres)	0	0	0	0	0
Cost					
Total Cost (millions)	0	$54 - $59 M	$60 - $73 M	$30 - $35 M	$32 - $37 M

*A parking space was assumed to be 10' by 20'

Alternate 1: No Build

Consists of routine maintenance, minor construction projects, and developer based improvements associated with new developments. The TSM/TDM strategy is part of the No-Build alternate.



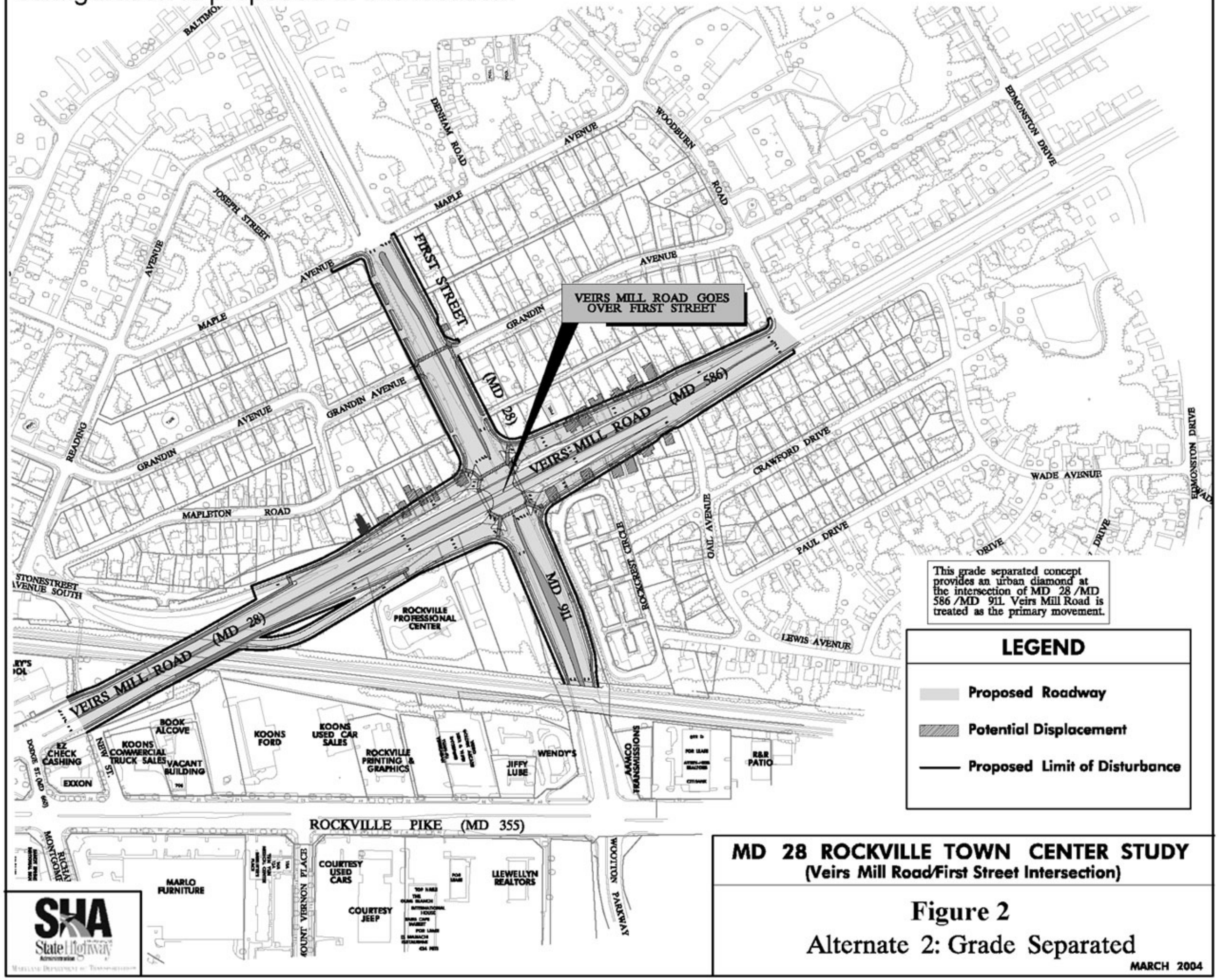
MD 28 ROCKVILLE TOWN CENTER STUDY
(Veirs Mill Road/First Street Intersection)

Figure 1
Alternate 1: No Build

MARCH 2004

Alternate 2: Grade Separated

Through traffic along Veirs Mill Road would go over First Street. An urban diamond configuration is proposed at this location.



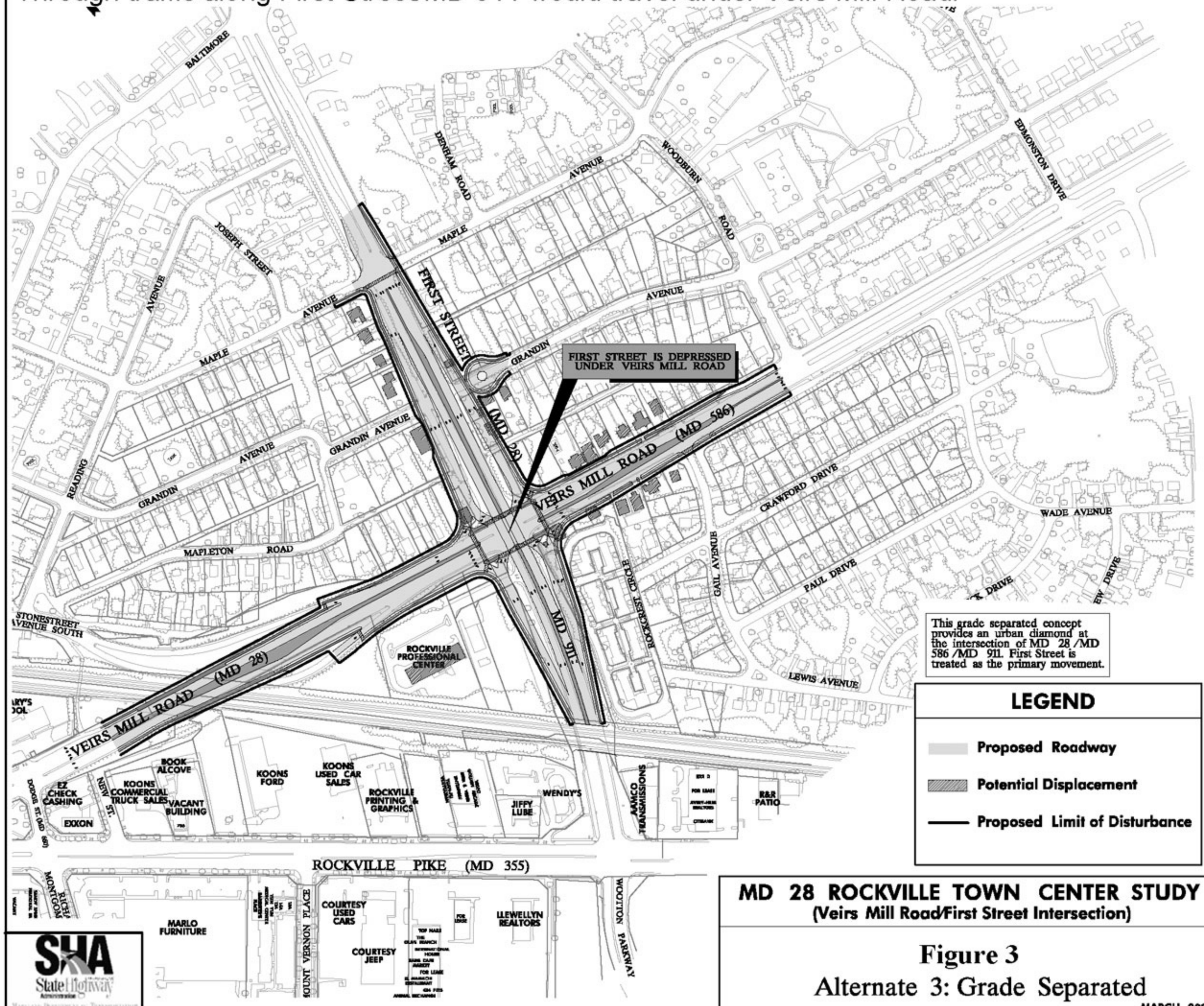
MD 28 ROCKVILLE TOWN CENTER STUDY
(Veirs Mill Road/First Street Intersection)

Figure 2
Alternate 2: Grade Separated

MARCH 2004

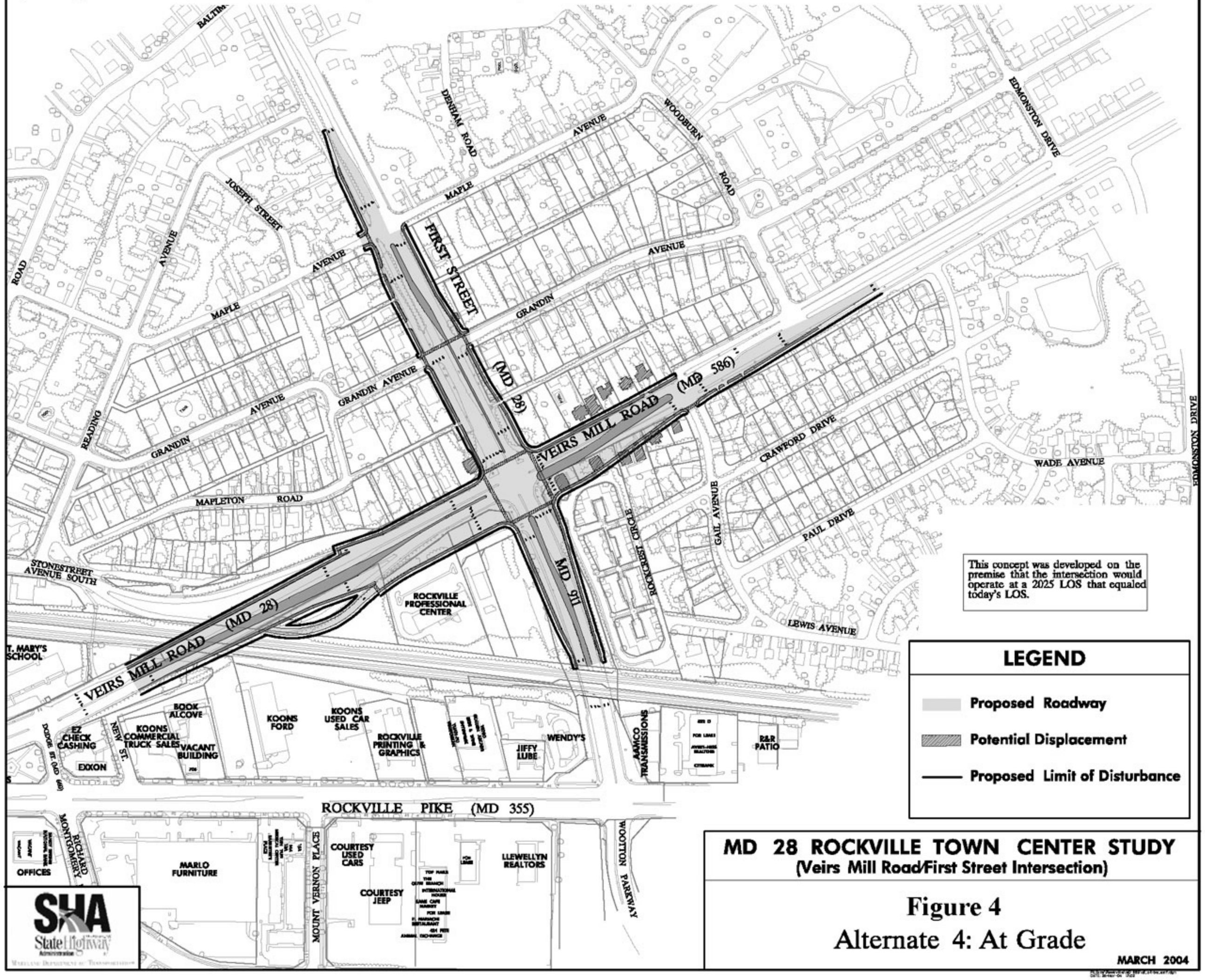
Alternate 3: Grade Separated

Through traffic along First Street/MD 911 would travel under Veirs Mill Road.



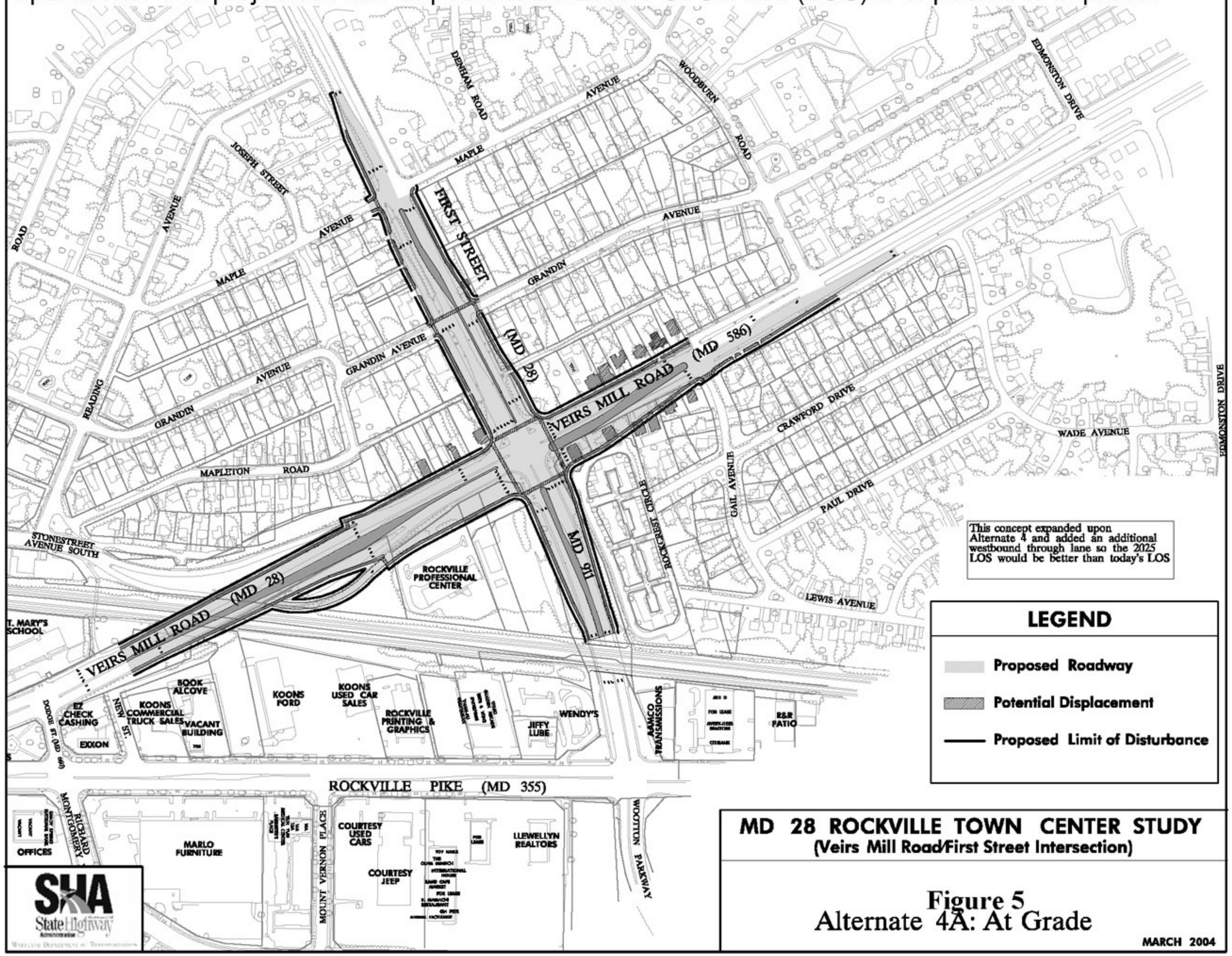
Alternate 4: At-Grade

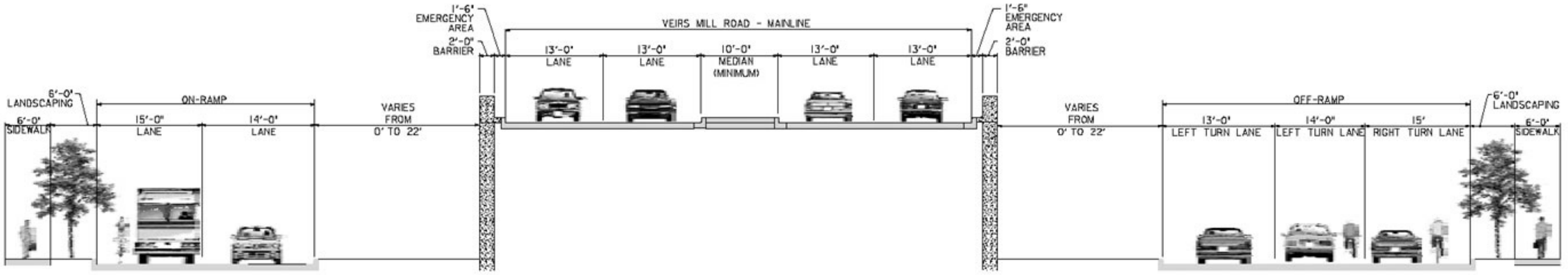
This alternate requires widening on each leg of the intersection. The projected level of service (LOS) at the intersection is expected to improve.



Alternate 4A: At-Grade

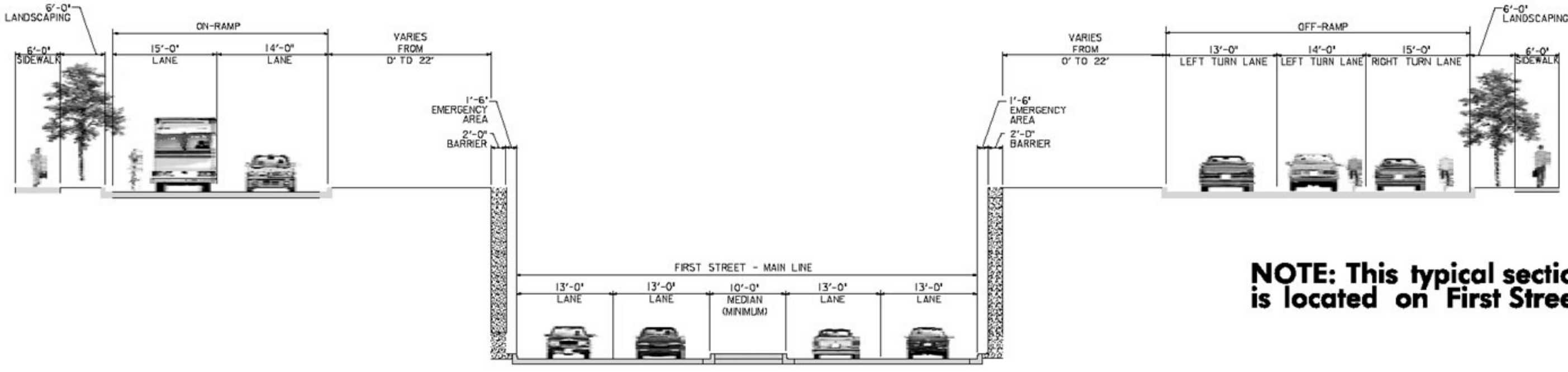
This alternate provides widening to accommodate traffic in the year 2025 which will improve traffic operations. The projected AM/PM peak hours Levels Of Service (LOS) is expected to improve.





Typical Section: Alternate 2: Grade Separated

NOTE: This typical section is located on Veirs Mill Road



Typical Section: Alternate 3: Grade Separated

NOTE: This typical section is located on First Street

13

MD 28 ROCKVILLE TOWN CENTER STUDY
(Veirs Mill Road/First Street Intersection)

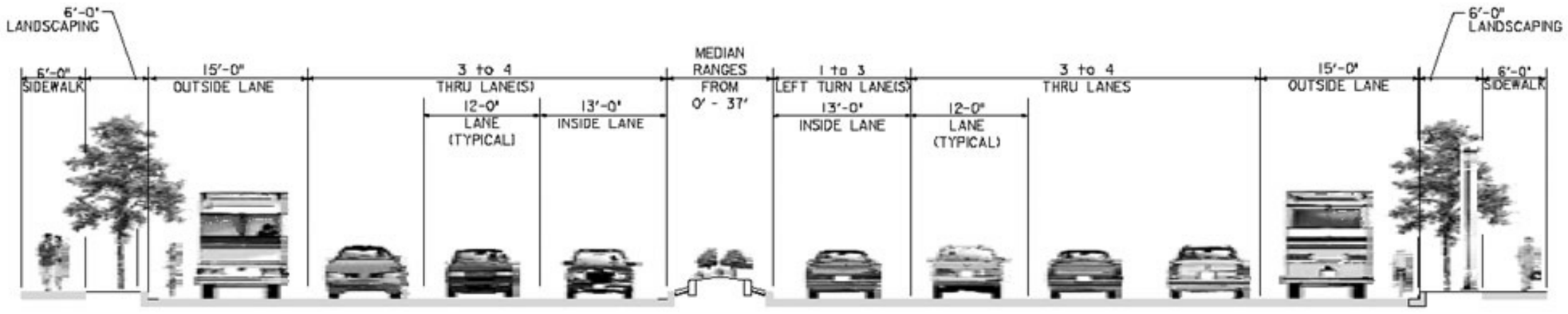
Figure 6

Alternates 2 & 3: Grade Separated Typical Sections

Not to Scale

MARCH 2004

SHA State Highway Administration
Maryland Department of Transportation



Typical Section:
At–Grade Alternates 4 & 4A

NOTE: This typical section approaches the Veirs Mill Road/First Street intersection.

MD 28 ROCKVILLE TOWN CENTER STUDY
(Veirs Mill Road/First Street Intersection)

Figure 7

Alternates 4 & 4A: At–Grade Typical Sections

Not to Scale

MARCH 2004

SHA State Highway Administration
Maryland Department of Transportation

STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
QUESTIONS AND/OR COMMENTS

MO843B11
ALTERNATES PUBLIC WORKSHOP

MD 28 ROCKVILLE TOWN CENTER
VIERS MILL ROAD AT FIRST STREET
IMPROVEMENT STUDY

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2004
5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Richard Montgomery High School
250 Richard Montgomery Drive
Rockville, MD 20852

PLEASE PRINT

NAME _____ **DATE** _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP** _____

I/We wish to comment or inquire about the following aspects of this project:

☐ **Please add my/our name(s) to the Mailing List.**

☐ **Please delete my/our name(s) from the Mailing List.**

* **Persons who have received a copy of this brochure through the mail are already on the project Mailing List**